MEMORANDUM: February 11, 1964

TO: J. Lee Rankin

FROM: Norman Redlich

SUBJECT: Article by Harold Feldman, entitled "Oswald and the FBI," dated January 27, 1964

I have analyzed the above-mentioned article which suggests that Oswald may have been at one time an undercover agent for the FBI. Certain facts are alleged in the article and I will comment on these allegations on the basis of the information I have read.

I. ERRONEOUS STATEMENTS IN ARTICLE

A. The FBI interviewed Oswald between the time of his return from New Orleans and the date of the assassination. I have seen nothing to support this statement and the author admits that there are contradictory statements concerning this interview. Marina and Ruth Paine confirm that they were interviewed during this period. The article quotes Michael Paine as stating that the FBI interviewed Oswald, but Michael was not living with Ruth during this period. Perhaps he meant the interview which the FBI had with Ruth Paine and Marina on November 1, and the follow-up interview with Ruth Paine on November 5.

B. The FBI tried to recruit Oswald as an agent in September "two months before Mr. Kennedy's death." The article quotes Marguerite Oswald as stating that Agent Hosty came to the Irving Street house and talked to Oswald "at length in his car." Marguerite Oswald did not see her son from September, 1962 until November 23, 1963. If she had knowledge of this interview with Hosty it could have only come from Lee himself, when he saw his mother in jail, or from Marina or Ruth. Ruth and Marina do not support Marguerite's statement and Lee's testimony is unavailable. I think that this allegation is a jumbled version of the interview which actually did take place in Hosty's car in August 1962 in Ft. Worth, which is described in Commission Doc. 10.

C. The article questions the Walker incident and says that at the time of the Walker shooting the Dallas police "reported the bullet was from a .30-06 caliber rifle," whereas the rifle that killed President Kennedy was "equivalent to about .27 caliber." The Dallas Police Report prepared at the time of the Walker shooting does not describe the caliber of the rifle believed to have fired the bullet recovered in Walker's home. When this bullet was compared with the bullet

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recovered from the stretcher at Parkland Hospital, the FBI lab concluded that they could have both been fired from the same weapon, although the Walker bullet was too mutilated to permit a definite conclusion that they were in fact fired from the same weapon.

D. The article stresses Oswald's poverty and says that he could not have bought the rifle and gone to Mexico with the money received from earnings and unemployment compensation. My reading of the material in our possession convinces me that the Mexican trip and other expenses were possible on the basis of Oswald's known sources of funds.

E. The article questions his ability to repay the State Department loan in the amount of $435.71 by January 29, 1963. His employment records reveal that during the months of November, December and January, Oswald was receiving considerable overtime pay with his weekly paycheck as high as $65-$70. During the month of October, 1962, Marina was living with Ellena Hall, and Oswald may have simply taken an apartment in Dallas, or lived at the YMCA. During these 16 weeks Oswald could have saved approximately 25 dollars per week and repaid the loan.

F. The article states that he rented an officelin New Orleans for $30 dollars per month. The Secret Service and FBI checked out these reports and they appear to be without factual foundation.

G. The article states that he had saved $1600 during his three years in the Marines. I have not found support for this statement. He is supposed to have had little funds when he arrived in Russia, because, according to Marina, he ran out of money in Moscow and the Russian government paid the hotel bill before he was sent to Minsk.

H. The article states that the police found in Oswald's room "several expensive cameras." According to our exhibits there was one camera which probably came from Russia or an Eastern European country. Marina has said that he also owned an American camera, but we do not have it.

I. It is claimed that small amounts of money, $10 and $20 at a time, were telegraphed to Oswald. The FBI investigation of Western Union records fails to substantiate this story.

J. The article states as false the fact that the assassination rifle was missing from the Paine garage on the morning of the assassination. Marina's sworn testimony supports the original claim.

II. FACTS WHICH ARE SUFFICIENTLY ACCURATE TO WARRANT FURTHER CONSIDERATION

A. Agent James Hosty's name, address, office phone number, auto license number, were in Oswald's address and phone book. This is correct, although Marina tells us that Oswald wrote this information in his book on November 1, 1963, after Hosty had interviewed Marina and Ruth, and had left the information with them.

B. The well-written letter to the national office of Fair Play for Cuba is in sharp contrast to the poor spelling in his other writings. This great variance in the level of his writings is found in other places and should be investigated further. The article gives the impression that only this letter to Fair Play for Cuba was well written. There are others and they are all hard to understand.

C. The ease with which he received a passport in June, 1963. This, of course, has been a matter of concern almost from the outset and will be investigated.

D. The article states that the police found "seven metal file boxes filled with names of Castro sympathizers" in Oswald's apartment. We have no record of "seven" boxes but one metal box was found which Marina says contained cards. We do not seem to have the cards, but we are checking further to see whether they are part of the FBI materials which we are cataloguing. If no cards are found, this requires further investigation.

E. The article quotes a U.S. Customs official in Laredo, Texas, as stating that "Oswald's movements" were watched "at the request of a federal agency at Washington." Another is quoted as saying that Oswald was "checked by American immigration officials on entering and leaving Mexico," which was not the "usual procedure." I have checked through the name indexes in the principal investigatory reports and have checked further with Slawson. Neither of us has yet discovered interviews with the two officials named in the article.

III. CONCLUSION

The article is factually inaccurate in many important respects, but the basic issue which it raises - Oswald's possible involvement with federal agencies - will have to be dealt with in our investigation. Moreover, the article contains certain allegations of fact which are worth

pursuing. In general it is wise to study articles such as this one rather than dismiss them because of their inevitable factual inaccuracies. They may contain the germ of an idea which we might otherwise overlook.